GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1587
ANSWERED ON:08.12.2015
Growth of Parthenium Grass
Gandhi Shri Feroze Varun

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government had formed a concrete plan to curb the growth of Parthenium grass in various parts of the country, and if so, the details thereof;

(b) the details of the mechanism put in place and the funds allocated and expenditure incurred on curbing the growth of the said grass during each of the last three years and the current year, State-wise;

(c) whether leaf feeding bio-agent Zygogramma bicolorata developed by the Directorate of Weed Research has been ineffective in curbing the growth of the said grass, if so, the details thereof and the action plan of the Government to come up with a scientific alternative; and

(d) the details of the any study conducted to measure the effect and effectiveness of bio-agent?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
(SHRI MOHANBHAI KALYANJIBHAI KUNDARIYA)

(a) No, Madam. It is difficult to form a concrete plan since Parthenium grows luxuriantly in most landuse conditions including crop lands, wastelands, forests and railway tracts. However, in pursuance of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture on Demands of Grants (2014-15) of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (Department of Agricultural Research and Education), a joint meeting of the representatives of DAC&FW, MoRD and ICAR-DWR, Jabalpur was organized on June 26, 2015 to develop a plan to curb the growth of Parthenium grass in various parts of the country. Subsequently, ICAR-DWR, Jabalpur developed an advisory and package of practices to manage the menace. The Parthenium advisory is available at the website www.dwr.org.in (Annexure-I). Besides, ICAR-DWR, Jabalpur through its network of All India Coordinated Research Project on Weed Management (AICRPWM) is conducting experiments on control of Parthenium using various methods since last decades. Integrated use of pre-emergent herbicides like atrazine @2 kg/ha or metribuzin @1.5 kg/ha during pre-monsoon followed by 1% glyphosate during onset of monsoon, release of 500-1000 Zygogramma bicolorata adults/ha and seeding competitive plant species viz. Cassia tora and C. serecia was found effective to suppress the population of Parthenium.

(b) An advisory note on Parthenium has been issued through the Ministry of Agriculture, GOI to all state governments, along with the techniques of management with relevant literature. ICAR-DWR, Jabalpur has also made special efforts to create awareness about negative effects of Parthenium on human and animal health besides loss to crop productivity and biodiversity. "Parthenium Awareness Week" has been observed since 2004 involving all the State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), ICAR institutes, many NGOs, schools, colleges etc.

ICAR-DWR through its 23 centres of AICRPWM located in different states provides funds to make Parthenium free campus (State Agricultural Universities/ICAR institutes) and to distribute bio-agent to stakeholders. More than 8 lakh bio-agents have also been distributed free of cost to farmers, municipalities, NGOs and interested persons throughout India.
Recently Department of Bio-technology (DBT) has allocated a fund of Rs. 87 lakh for three years (2015-17) to Manipur University, Imphal and ICAR-DWR, Jabalpur in the form of a joint research project for the biological control based integrated management of Parthenium in the North-East region.

(c) No, Madam.

(d) ICAR through DWR, Jabalpur and 23 centres of AICRPWM is continuously engaged in testing the efficiency and effectiveness of various measures including bio-agents (insects, fungi, nematodes, snails, slugs and competitive plants etc.) and develop location specific integrated management practices. Introduction of Zygogramma bicolorata suppressed the Parthenium menace up to 75% in experiments conducted at centres of AICRPWM.

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